Easton, Pennsylvania                                      January 9, 2014

A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Margaret L. Ferraro, President; Glenn A. Geissinger, Vice-President; Mathew M. Benol; Kenneth M. Kraft; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Scott Parsons; Hayden Phillips; Seth Vaughn; Robert F. Werner; Frank E. Flisser, Clerk to Council, and Philip D. Lauer, Solicitor to Council.

Prayer

Mrs. Ferraro led County Council in prayer to open the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ferraro led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. McClure made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the December 4, 2013, December 5, 2013, December 12, 2013 and January 6, 2014 meetings shall be approved.

Mr. Werner seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation, with Mr. Kraft abstaining on approval of the December 12, 2013 minutes.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mrs. Ferraro asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to offer comments. There were no respondents.
County Executive’s Report

Mr. John A. Brown, County Executive, stated he was looking forward to working with everyone.

Mr. Brown advised in keeping with the Home Rule Charter, Section 305 Temporary Absence or Incapacity of the County Executive, he was appointing Victor Scocillio as his designee.

Mr. Brown stated effective at the close of business on January 10, 2014, he was appointing Chief Deputy Sheriff Christopher Zieger as Acting Sheriff.

Election of the Sheriff Position

Mr. McClure advised that last year, he and Mr. Kraft started discussions with regard to having row officers elected. He further advised there was not a great deal of support for the idea so they did not pursue it.

Mr. McClure stated with the recent dismissal of Sheriff Randall Miller, it caused him to rethink this issue, noting over time, changes have been made to the operation of County government.

Mr. McClure advised he did not believe there would be support to have all of the row officers elected, but now would be the time to start the dialogue of having the Sheriff being elected. He further advised almost all of the other Counties in the Commonwealth had an elected Sheriff and allowed the voters to decide who the Sheriff would be.

Mr. McClure stated during the debate last year, it was mentioned that the way Northampton County did it was a superior process, but this position was now going to be advertised.

Mr. McClure advised the Home Rule Charter provided that the Sheriff was an appointed position and County Council could not just change it, noting it would have to done through a referendum.

Mr. Kraft stated if County Council decided to have such a referendum, it would be on November’s ballot. He further stated the Sheriff’s term would run concurrently with the District
Mr. Kraft advised Northampton County was one of only two accredited Sheriff Departments in the entire State of Pennsylvania and that happened within three years of Sheriff Randall's term.

Bridge Pilot Program

Mr. Werner stated just before the start of the new year, he learned of a State pilot program for bridges and he wanted to make everyone aware of it. He further stated there were three Counties currently serving as test Counties in something called bridge bundling.

Mr. Werner advised the pilot has been expanded Statewide and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation was coordinating and paying the full cost for fixing, replacing or refurbishing 38 bridges. He further advised Northampton County had to get into this program because it had a lot of bridges that required some type of work.

Mrs. Ferraro stated the County's State representatives should be made aware of this so they could band together to push for the County's participation. She further stated this was an issue for the Intergovernmental Committee to pursue.

Mr. Vaughn advised he researched this program and felt County Council should try to go after these funds because he believed the program was 100% funded. He further advised the bundling program was where the State took a bridge model and fit it to a specific need, which saved engineering costs.

Mr. Kraft stated he would also like the County Executive to do what he could do to assist in this endeavor and volunteered to help him.

Consideration of the Resolution Confirming the Appointment of the County Solicitor

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:
R. 3-2014 RESOLVED, by County Council of Northampton County that Victor E. Scomillio shall be confirmed in his appointment as County Solicitor, pay grade RS-12, salary $58,050, effective January 9, 2014.

Mr. Scomillio advised he was privileged that Mr. Brown had asked him to assume this role.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.

The vote: Kraft, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes"; Geissinger, "yes"; McClure, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Vaughn, "yes" and Benol, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Consideration of the Resolution Confirming the Appointment of the Northampton County Council Solicitor

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

R. 4-2014 RESOLVED, by County Council of Northampton County that Phil Lauer shall be confirmed in his appointment as Solicitor to the Northampton County Council, pay grade RS-8, salary $52,405, effective January 9, 2014.

As there were no questions or comments, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.

The vote: Kraft, "yes"; McClure, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Vaughn, "yes"; Benol, "yes"; Ferraro, "yes" and Geissinger, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Committee Assignments

Mrs. Ferraro stated that she and Mr. Flisser have been working on the committee assignments, which should be completed by next week.
County Council Minutes -5- January 9, 2014

Meeting Prayer

Mrs. Ferraro advised if any member of County Council wished to offer the prayer or a moment of silence before a meeting, to let her know.

Mr. Kraft stated it had to be a non-denominational prayer because County Council was a public body.

Lawsuit

Mr. Benol advised one of the issues that arose during his campaign was the lawsuit that occurred between the governing bodies. He further advised he would like to see the County Solicitor and County Council’s Solicitor work together to bring this lawsuit to a conclusion because the taxpayers were paying for the litigation.

Mr. Lauer stated that he had spoken to Mr. Scimillio briefly about that issue. He further stated before he could take any steps to change County Council’s position, he would need guidance from County Council.

Gracedale Advisory Board Meeting Report

Mr. Werner advised that he and Mr. Geissinger attended the Gracedale Advisory Board meeting. He further advised Gracedale was at 90% capacity with a census of 645. He noted the short term units were all filled and the current time for admission was 11 minutes.

Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority Meeting Report

Mr. Kraft stated they were opening the first round of grant applications for 2014.

In answer to Mr. Parsons’ question as to whether they were considering applications from outside the parameter at this time, Mr. Kraft advised they were doing the designated surrounding municipalities first and then it would be opened up to the other areas.
In response to Mr. Parsons's question as to whether they opened the application process to the surrounding areas in 2013, Mr. Kraft indicated they did not.

CRE - Super Bacteria Outbreak

Mr. Werner stated during the meeting at Gracedale, it was noted that there was a super bacteria, called CRE, outbreak in nursing homes and hospitals in Chicago that was causing fatalities. He further stated the reason he was bringing it up was because this was where a bi-County health department would be beneficial.

In answer to Mr. McClure's question as to whether it was at Gracedale, Mr. Werner advised it was not, he just wanted to let everyone know about it.

Adjournment

Mr. McClure made a motion to adjourn.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

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Frank E. Flisser
Clerk to Council

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